

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1393

AMEMBASSY PARIS

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: EC REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN: ANTI-MARTEKTEERS EX-
PLOIT GISCARD STATEMENTS

REF: LONDON 7828

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SUMMARY - ANTI-MARKETEERS MAY 22 CHARGED THAT FRENCH PRE-

SIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING HAD EFFECTIVELY REPUDIATED BRITAIN'S RENEGOTIATED EC MEMBERSHIP TERMS. THIS ALLEGATION BASED ON THEIR INTERPRETATION OF REPORTS OF GISCARD'S MAY 21 PRESS CONFERENCE, HAS PROVIDED THEM WITH A POTENTIALLY EFFECTIVE ISSUE AND ONE WHICH APPEARS TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY. ITS ULTIMATE IMPACT ON POPULAR ATTITUDES, WHICH PRIVATE POLLS INDICATE STRONGLY FAVOR CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP, CANNOT YET BE ASSESSED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET REPLIED TO THE ANTI-MARKETEERS' ATTACK. END SUMMARY.

1. FIVE ANTI-EC MEMBERS OF LABOR GOVERNMENT (BENN, FOOT, CASTLE, HART AND SILKIN) MAY 22 ISSUED STATEMENT ALLEGING THAT MAY 21 PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS OF FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING "EFFECTIVELY REPUDIATED THE TERMS" OF BRITAIN'S RENEGOTIATED CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP. ANTI-MARKET MINISTERS BASED THIS ASSERTION ON THEIR INTERPRETATION OF GISCARD'S STATED DESIRE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH PLANS FOR ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION AND THE IMPLICATION IN HIS REMARKS THAT UK HAD RENOUNCED ITS VETO IN THE PARIS SUMMIT AGREEMENT OF DECEMBER 1974 -- "HE (GISCARD) MADE IT PLAIN THAT THE PROSPEROUS MEMBERS OF THE EEC WOULD PURSUE THIS POLICY IRRESPECTIVE OF BRITAIN'S VIEW, AND HE SAID THAT WE WOULD BE UNABLE TO JOIN THE UNION BECAUSE OF OUR LASTING ECONOMIC WEAKNESS".

2. GISCARD'S REMARKS (WE HAVE NOT SEEN TEXT) COULD NOT HAVE COME AT BETTER TIME FOR ANTI-MARKETEERS WHOSE CAMPAIGN HAS NOT TAKEN HOLD AS THEY HAD HOPED (REFTEL). THE ASSERTIONS OF THE ANTI-EC GROUP, MOREOVER, IMPUGN THE GOOD FAITH OF EC MEMBER COUNTRIES AND THE WILSON GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY. THE GOVERNMENT HAS YET TO RESPOND TO THE ATTACK -- ACCORDING TO MAY 22 EVENING TELEVISION, MEDIA INQUIRIES WERE BEING MET WITH BRUSQUE "NO COMMENT".

3. ISSUES RAISED BY THESE ALLEGATIONS ARE POTENTIALLY DAMAGING TO PRO-MARKETEERS, ALTHOUGH TREND OF PUBLIC OPINION IS NOW RUNNING STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP (REFTEL). IN THIS REGARD, WE UNDERSTAND POLLS COMMISSIONED BY "LABOR IN EUROPE" GROUP INDICATE MAJORITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPINION IN ALL PARTS OF BRITAIN, INCLUDING SCOTLAND AND WALES, SUPPORTS GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATION. MOST SURPRISINGLY, POLLS REPORTEDLY ALSO INDICATE MAJORITY OF LABOR VOTERS AND MAJORITY OF TRADE UNION MEMBERS FAVOR CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP. IT IS, OF COURSE, PREMATURE TO ASSESS IMPACT OF THE GISCARD ISSUE, AS MUCH WILL DEPEND ON HOW GOVERNMENT RESPONDS AS WELL AS HOW EFFECTIVELY ANTI-MARKETEERS FOLLOW UP.

4. FOR PARIS. PLEASE PROVIDE TEXT OF GISCARD'S REMARKS
CONCERNING ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION AND HIS REFERENCE
TO "RENUNCIATION" OF VETO.

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